



Status Report- Winter 2001

Thanks to all the volunteers that are making this project a success!

MANCHESTER'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Background

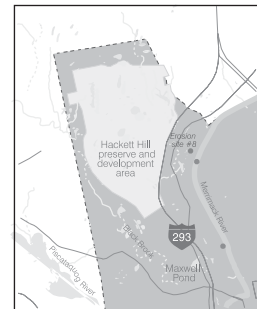
As part of an innovative agreement reached in March 1999 to reduce sewer overflows into the Merrimack and Piscataquog rivers, the city will undertake \$52.4 million in projects to eliminate the majority of sewer overflows. The city will also undertake \$5.6 million in supplemental environmental projects to benefit the city's environment. This includes \$2 million for land preservation; \$1 million to restore urban ponds; \$1 million to stabilize streambanks, \$1 million to reduce stormwater pollution; \$500,000 to reduce health threats to children; and \$100,000 for environmental education. This status report updates the activities of these supplemental environmental projects.

Streambank Stabilization

Manchester now has a much better idea of the conditions along the 11 miles of the Merrimack River as it winds through the City. The final report on the volunteer effort to inventory the streambanks, by boat and by foot, has been completed. The report entitled: **Merrimack River Streambank Inventory: Manchester, New Hampshire** was compiled by Katie Hughes, an Americorps member working with the Hillsborough County Conservation District. The report identified a total of 66 potential environmental problems. These included 33 pipe outfalls, 18 bank erosion sites, 10 trash dumping sites and 5 unusual conditions. The report also noted several areas for potential restoration and public access. Also included are an excellent series of maps produced by David Beauchesne of the Manchester Planning Department which were compiled from a data base he created to manage, analyze and update the inventory information. The report includes specific recommendations for restoration for each of the 15 separate "reaches" or sections of the river. Amoskeag Fishways has hired Katie Hughes to continue this work, now that her Americorps stint is over. Copies of the report are available for viewing at the Amoskeag Fishway. Brochures related to the project will be available in March.

Land Preservation - Hackett Hill

The City has acquired the 376 acres of globally rare habitat at Hackett Hill and now it is getting to know it better. Monitoring wells are collecting data and the boundary was surveyed and staked, then walked to for field checking and refinement. The City will turn this land over to The Nature Conservancy to be managed as a preserve when all parties involved are in agreement as to the exact location of the preserve boundaries. The Nature Conservancy is developing a stewardship and management plan and has begun trail design for the preserve property.



The City is also continuing negotiations with adjacent properties for the purchase of 283 acres to increase the amount of protected land around the Preserve.

Urban Pond Restoration

Manchester's ponds are getting some attention. Volunteers have collected baseline water quality data at all seven ponds and a comprehensive pond "problem area" list has been generated based on shoreline surveys. Projects are now getting underway. With help from a grant from Wal-mart/Sam's Club the invasive plant species are being replaced with native species and the vegetation around McQueston pond will be enhanced. Planning is underway for a runoff treatment project at Crystal Lake. A new pond association at Doors Pond, Doors Pond Environmental Initiative, has been created to improve the trails and plant native shrubs and flowering plants. Art Grindle, Urban Pond Coordinator will be holding meetings in the watersheds for each pond this winter. A community meeting was held for the Stevens Pond Watershed Jan. 31st which was a great success. The participants were enthusiastic about becoming more involved and had a lot of great ideas about how to improve the pond and their community in general. The Maxwell Pond Watershed meeting was canceled due to bad weather, but is rescheduled for Wednesday Feb. 7th. Contact Art for more information (603) 624-6450.



Health Risk Reduction for Children

The Manchester Health Department recently awarded two local grants from supplemental CSO funds. The first grant application was awarded to the American Lung Association of New Hampshire for \$7,000 to establish a baseline data collection system on the prevalence and severity of asthma in the Manchester Public Elementary Schools. A questionnaire was developed, distributed and received an incredible 72% response rate. The second grant was awarded to the Way Home's Healthy Home Service Project for \$43,000. This grant will expand their project for peer education for lead poisoning prevention, improve in-home asthma trigger education, and engage in training and monitoring of interventions.

Another exciting effort is occurring in collaboration with the NH DES to conduct an air quality monitoring project at the Beech Street school, which has exhibited an elevated incidence of asthma. Canisters are placed inside and outside of the school at specific locations to collect air samples. Additionally, the school nurse was trained to use an air canister to sample the indoor air when numerous asthma incidents are observed in a given period of time.

Dr. Rosemary M. Caron, Toxicologist, hired through the SEPP, continues to organize these efforts, serve on committees, collect and analyze data, submit grants and develop brochures and fact sheets to continue to improve the health of citizens in Manchester. She recently completed a brochure entitled, *Cancer and the Environment*, and fact sheets on the West Nile Virus. For more information on the activities at the Manchester Health Department, see the web site: <http://eol.grolen.com/manch>.



Mark Your Calendars for Pond Day June 23rd! This will be a day of games, prizes and education centered around Manchester's ponds. It will be held at Livingston Park on the D. W. Highway.

During 4 pond clean ups this year 89 bags of garbage were removed from the ponds, along with 23 tires, 4 shopping carts, 2 bicycles, 3 barrels and various other debris. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out.

Project Contacts

Land Preservation Krista Helmboldt (603) 224-5853
Streambanks Katie Hughes (603) 626-3474
Urban Ponds Art Grindle (603) 624-6450
Children's Health Rosemary Caron (603) 624-6466 x317
Education Beth Brazil (978) 681-5777
Hotline (603) 665-6812
Eric Williams, DES (603) 271-2358
Trish Garrigan, EPA (617) 918-1583

Environmental Education

There is exciting news on this front. After working with a group of Manchester teachers for over a year a final draft environmental curriculum was completed for the eighth grade 2000-2001 school year! The curriculum is called: ***Merrimack River MATTERS*** (Manchester's Actions That Totally Enhance River Systems). We have Dave Kellam of the Amoskeag fishways to thank for that catchy title. The Fishway and the Merrimack River Watershed Council worked with the following Manchester teachers to pull this project together: Steve Amick, Debbie Banaian, Althea Berry, Kathy Carlson, Julie Dubisz, Wendy Foster, Doreen Gagne-Martin, Steve Harris, Marcelle LaGraize, Pamela LeBlanc, Meghan O'Neil, Richard Remillard, and Rich Terrel. This curriculum is currently being piloted at the Hillside, Parkside, Southside and McLaughlin Middle schools. This project will have the youth of the City learning about the City's environment, and their place in it. As with many educational activities, supplies and materials are needed to help carry this out - we have a list of needs and welcome any donations or support of any kind. Contact Beth Brazil, MRWC (978) 681-5777.

Related News

Storm Drain Stenciling Guide Now Available

A 20 page booklet which describes how to organize a storm drain stenciling project was recently released by the MRWC and Amoskeag Fishway. The booklet describes what stormwater is and why storm drains should not be used for dumping. It was written based on the experience of teachers and students at Hillside Junior High School who helped stencil a message on the street at 150 storm drains last spring. Contact Beth Brazil at MRWC at (617) 681-5777.

Website

Check out the EPA-New England web site for additional information on the Manchester Project.
www.epa.gov/region01/eo/csoman/index.html

Brochure Available

Manchester's Environmental Challenge brochure is available. In case you haven't seen it a four panel color brochure which describes the effort in detail is available. Contact Vic Hyman at (603) 665-6812.

We're Making Progress Toward a Cleaner River

The first of eight project to separate sewer and stormwater pipes has been completed on Theophile street. This separation of pipes will eliminate raw sewage from going to the Piscataquog River via a stormdrain during rain events. The Electric Street area is the next to be separated - so look for the backhoes and dirt piles over there. Please continue to frequent local businesses and be patient with the inconvenience. Eventually, we will all benefit from a cleaner river.

Interested in getting involved with Manchester's Environmental Challenge? We have a list of needs and a call for partners and ideas ready to circulate. Call the hot line number at (603) 665-6812 and let us know. We welcome businesses, universities, scout troops, churches, anyone to get involved and be part of the challenge!